

MEETING REPORT NO. 23

PROJECT: **Town of Needham Downtown Study**

DATE: 03 December 2007

LOCATION: Town Hall

PRESENT: Downtown Study Committee (DSC)

Kate Fitzpatrick	Town Manager
Jerry Wasserman	Chairman, Board of Selectmen
Bob Smart	Cochair, DSC Committee
Moe Handel	Cochair, Planning Board
Lee Newman	Planning Director
Alexandra Clee	Assistant Planner
Joyce Moss	Economic Development Officer
Mark Gluesing	Design Review Board
Kathy Lewis	Needham Business Association
Paul Good	Chair, Needham Community Revitalization Committee
John Edgar	Economic Development Advisory Committee
Jeanne McKnight	Planning Board & League of Women Voters
Peter Friedenberg	Citizen at Large

Needham Cultural Council

Jean Connolly

DiNisco Design Partnership (DDP)

Kenneth DiNisco
Jon Oxman

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this meeting was to review and discuss the Concept Plan as submitted for the report and identify next steps.

2. CONCEPT PLAN

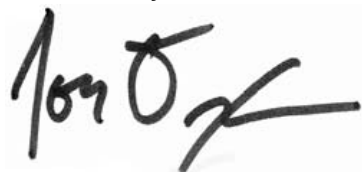
- 2.1. Ken DiNisco gave a brief presentation on the draft chapter for the Concept Plan. See attached draft. DSC members pointed out minor corrections which will be incorporated in a revision of this chapter.
- 2.2. Boards with illustrative site plans of the overall study area and the three sub-study areas were used as reference for this discussion. See attached site plans. These plans suggest how development could eventually take place. An alternate version of the site plans printed at 11" x 17" were also shown whose purpose is to illustrate the proposed zoning plan. See attached zoning site plans.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1. Transitions to Adjacent Residential Districts: The DSC agreed to the following transitions:
 - 3.1.1. Chestnut Street West – The current setback here is a 10 FT buffer, suitably landscaped. It was agreed that 3 + 1 stories will only be allowed at properties with Chestnut Street frontage. Other properties, without frontage on Chestnut Street, will have the current zoning of 2 1/2 stories. There will also be a setback from the edge of the railroad right of way (distance to be determined) and the current zoning requirement for a 10 FT landscaped buffer will be maintained.
 - 3.1.2. Chestnut Street East – Current setback of 50 FT with the first 25 FT required to be landscaped and not containing accessory uses will be maintained. The setback will be measured from the edge of the adjacent residential district as is currently done.
- 3.2. Garden Street - Jeanne McKnight suggested that the separate northern part of Chestnut Street Business District be renamed Garden Street District to avoid confusion.
- 3.3. Other Considerations for the New Zoning Regulations – Lee Newman suggested inclusion of the following in the new zoning regulations:
 - 3.3.1. Increase in Lot Size – Increasing the minimum lot size as a requirement to qualify for increased density allowances. The intent is to encourage consolidation of parcels.
 - 3.3.2. Maximum as well as Minimum Front Setbacks at Chestnut Street
 - 3.3.3. Incentives for Housing – Allow increased density, such as higher FARs, for projects with housing and affordable housing. The report will also reference the 2004 Housing Study recommendations.
- 3.4. Traffic / Pedestrian Circulation
 - 3.4.1. The DSC asked if it was possible to reduce the width of Great Plain Avenue to increase pedestrian safety in crossing this street and what could be done in general to make it safer and easier for pedestrians to cross streets.
 - 3.4.2. John Edgar raised the issue of the Sudbury Farms entrance as having one of the highest frequencies of traffic incidents in Town, as pointed out by Chief Leary at a previous DSC meeting (See Meeting Report #11). The report will note this issue for possible future consideration.
 - 3.4.3. There was a general discussion of which sidewalks and / or pedestrian zones should be widened.
- 3.5. Parking – Joyce Moss is applying for a Department of Housing and Community Development grant for studying improved parking management of existing spaces. Grants will be announced 01/25/08 and the study could take from one to two months.
- 3.6. Signage – Paul Good requested that the signage by-law be revised to allow for perpendicular signs at stores if sign design requirements are met.

- 3.7. Areas of Potential Development – The following locations identified on the illustrative site plan were discussed as areas of potential development: Needham Junction Station, Hospital, Chestnut Street Parking Lot, Walgreens, and Needham Center Station. Emery Grover, although not identified on the site plan and not in the study area was also discussed.
4. NEXT STEPS
- 4.1. Concept Plan Phase
- Points of discussion from this meeting will be incorporated into an addendum of the Concept Plan chapter.
- 4.2. Comprehensive Development Phase:
- Zoning Regulations & Signage Bylaw
 - Parking
 - Location of Sidewalk / Pedestrian Zone Widening
 - Streetscape Improvements – Cost estimate & priority
 - Design Guidelines
 - Visualizations of likely development at 10, 15 and 20 years
 - Public Forum
5. NEXT MEETINGS
- 5.1. The DSC will meet on Monday, 07 January 2008 at 7:45 AM. Location TBD.

The discussions of this meeting are recorded as understood by the writer. Please advise the writer of any omissions or corrections.



Jon Oxman AIA
DiNISCO DESIGN

JAO/

cc: DSC
Kenneth DiNisco
Richard Rice

Enclosures:	1.	Draft Section of Study:	Concept Plan (11/29/07)
	2.	Illustrative Site Plans	Concept Plan – Potential Development Scenario (11/15/07)
	3.	Illustrative Site Plans	Concept Plan – Zoning (11/30/07)